

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOE-15 SOE-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 /103 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1423
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UNCLAS QUEBEC 0269

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EFIN, CA
SUBJECT: WHO'S GOING TO BE AN INDIAN GIVER?

1. INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO REMISSION OF 85 DOLLARS BY FEDERAL TREASURY DIRECTLY TO QUEBEC TAXPAYERS HAS RANGED FROM PROUD DISDAIN TO UNDISGUISED JOY. LE SOLEIL CONDUCTED INFORMAL OPINION POLL IN QUEBEC ON AUGUST 1. MOST OF THOSE INTERVIEWED PRIMLY DECLARED THAT THEY WOULD "KEEP THE 85 DOLLARS FOR PARIZEAU." A FEW, WITH EVIDENT GLEE, SAID THEY WOULD SQUANDER THEIR WINDFALL. ACCORDING TO FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, MANY RECIPIENTS ARE ENDORSING CHECKS AND SENDING THEM IMMEDIATELY TO QUEBEC TREASURY. AFTER SOME INITIAL CONFUSION, ACTING PREMIER, JACQUES-IVAN MORIN, HAS TOLD PUBLIC THAT CHECKS WILL BE WELCOME AT TREASURY AND WILL BE CREDITED TO NEXT YEAR'S TAX BILL.

2. BLUNT MESSAGE FROM CHRETIEN WAS ENCLOSED WITH CHECKS ACCUSING GOQ OF DEPRIVING QUEBECOIS OF MONIES SET ASIDE FOR THEM IN FEDERAL BUDGET. REBATE SCHEME, MESSAGE ASSERTS, WAS ADOPTED BY FEDERAL PARLIAMENT TO PREVENT QUEBECOIS FROM BEING PENALIZED.

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3. COMMENT: HARD TO GUAGE HOW MUCH CREDIT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL ULTIMATELY GAIN IN QUEBEC FROM REBATES. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, IS CLEARLY FACED WITH DILEMMA. IT WILL CERTAINLY GENERATE WIDESPREAD ANIMOSITY IF IT ATTEMPTS DIRECTLY RECOVER 85 DOLLARS FROM RECIPIENTS. ON OTHER HAND, ITS BUDGET WILL BE DRASTICALLY UNBALANCED BY UNCOMPENSATED LOSS OF REVENUE INCURRED FROM SUSPENSION OF SALES TAX ON SHOES, CLOTHING

AND FURNITURE. NONETHELESS, I DOUBT GOQ WILL CHANCE INCURRING
TAXPAYERS' WRATH BY ATTEMPTING RECOVER LOST REVENUE BY
PROPORTIONATE INCREASE IN DIRECT TAXES.
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